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MARICOPA COUNTY



2020

Eye To The Future



MAY, 2008

MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA

CAREFREE HIGHWAY SCENIC CORRIDOR STUDY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preparation of the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study was made possible through the cooperative efforts of many public and private stakeholders. Maricopa County extends its appreciation to all those that participated in this process, including the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, Planning and Zoning Commission, citizens, property owners, cities, towns, state and federal agencies, and other stakeholders.

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- Murray Johnson (*District 5*)

Planning and Development Department

Comprehensive Planning Team

- Joy Rich, AICP, Director
- Darren Gerard, AICP, Deputy Director
- Matthew Holm, AICP, Principal Planner
- John Verdugo, AICP, Senior Planner (Project Manager)
- Brian McCabe, Planner
- Jeff Clawson, Planner
- Jose Macias, Planner

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PREFACE

Maricopa County recognizes that urban development will continue to change land use patterns. The major factor in development, especially in Maricopa County, has been significant population growth. Recent Arizona Department of Economic Security projections note that Maricopa County will have 4.5 million people by 2020. With that population it is inevitable that development will continue throughout Maricopa County. Therefore, it is important to plan for and accommodate growth in a careful and deliberate manner.

Eye on the Future 2020, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan, provides a guide for decisions concerning growth and development, and considers strategies for addressing growth-related impacts. Among the strategies is the creation of scenic corridors for unique roads in Maricopa County. The Carefree Highway area is one of these roads, and thus the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Guidelines are established to help enhance this area's special characteristics.

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INTRODUCTION

The entire county is experiencing rapid growth and development which will continue to change the once rural landscape to a region characterized by urban development. Aside from the obvious impacts to land, the environment, and water resources, it is important to consider the changing impacts to scenic areas like those along Carefree Highway. Consequently, Maricopa County initiated an update to its Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study, which was approved in 1997.

In 1997, the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study was established by Maricopa County to help mitigate the impacts of new development. Under the existing plan, the guidelines help protect scenic views by restricting building heights, encouraging landscaping along roads and within medians, encouraging the screening of loading and unloading docks and trash containers, balancing the number and size of commercial signs, allowing efficient and safe lighting, and encouraging architectural design that complements this scenic corridor.

Scenic views are impacted by a variety of growth related factors including tall structures, loading and unloading docks trash containers, unsightly and overbearing signs, dull perimeter walls, intense lighting, and unattractive buildings. Limiting the impacts of new development on scenic views is important because it is difficult to regain once it has been lost. For instance, residents of the Carefree Highway region frequently cited Bell Road as an example of what they don't want to occur along Carefree Highway. Portions of Bell Road have experienced growth related impacts such as limited landscaping, overbearing sign and billboards, unattractive buildings, and access management issues due to increased traffic.

The Carefree Highway area is a unique place and these guidelines have been developed to guide and enhance planning of this unique setting as development occurs. The intent of these guidelines is to highlight, promote, and preserve Carefree Highway's scenic and environmental characteristics, and help reflect the character of the community.

The main factors that help promote Carefree Highway as a scenic corridor include:

- Unique views and landscapes that attract residents and contribute to the quality of life, economic health, and community pride of current residents and property owners.
- The scenic and rural character of the New River and Desert Hills area.
- The existing views of near and distant mountains as well as the desert landscape, washes, dark night skies, and openness that enhance the experience of residents and those traveling along the highway.

Scenic Corridor Overview

Scenic corridors help highlight unique aspects of an area or region, and recognize that people live in or near these areas for their unique qualities. Based on the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan, scenic corridor guidelines are structured to emphasize public participation and reflect the comments, ideas, and recommendations of the public. Therefore, the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor design guidelines give the area's residents an opportunity to voice

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their decisions about future urban growth that will impact their lives, and identify a common vision, set of ideas, and concepts about their region. This study also addresses impacts from future urban development to help maintain the corridor's unique character and the residents' quality of life. Although "scenic" is a subjective term, for this study it means an inherent characteristic that is existing and apparent in both the natural and built environment.

Scenic Corridor Boundary

Some areas previously included in the 1997 Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study are no longer included in the updated plan due to annexation by adjacent jurisdictions. The design guidelines are intended to preserve views to areas of visual significance outside the boundary such as New River Mountains, Table Mesa, Daisy Mountain, Pyramid Peak, Four Peaks, and other surrounding mountains. The portion of Carefree Highway included in the updated scenic corridor plan is located in unincorporated Maricopa County, see **Figure 1: Scenic Corridor Location**. It is a 3.5 mile segment between 7th Ave. and the 28th St. alignment including areas ¼ mile north and south on either side of the highway right-of-way.

Scenic Corridor Purpose

These guidelines help implement Maricopa County's comprehensive plan by encouraging new development to follow these guidelines as part of the entitlement and development process. This document is not meant to present a formal design plan, but provides guidelines to help protect and enhance the Carefree Highway area as development occurs. While scenic corridor design guidelines give residents input on the development of their region, it is important to identify their limitations. Most important, they are policy, not regulatory, meaning they are guides for public and private decision makers about the character of urban development in the Carefree Highway area.

These design guidelines only apply to new residential master planned communities, subdivisions, commercial, and industrial development. There are other limitations as well, which are briefly discussed below.

These design guidelines **DO NOT**:

- Prevent the sale or transfer of land which can be bought and sold at the discretion of the responsible parties
- Prevent development of land which can be developed in accordance with the Maricopa County Planning and Zoning policies and regulations
- Apply to existing homes, buildings or structures.
- Apply to residential development outside of recorded subdivisions.
- Designate historic land or buildings— such designation are typically a federal process

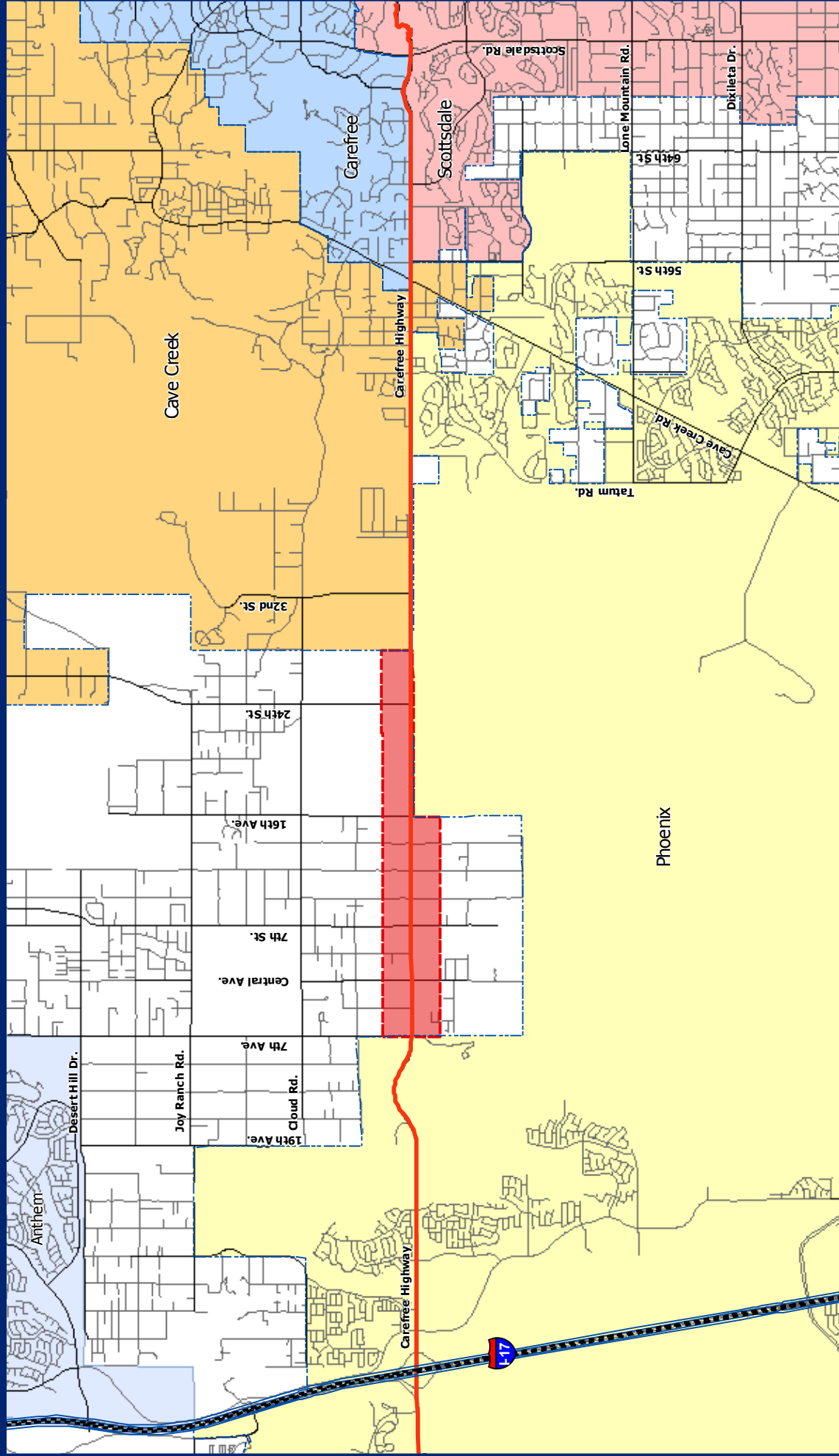
Future Development Implications

In Maricopa County, scenic corridors have neither deterred nor promoted growth. These guidelines assume that the historic patterns of growth and development will continue. Therefore, these guidelines are intended to help integrate growth into the community, to

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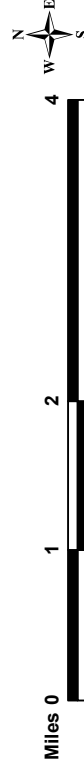
minimize impacts to personal property and quality of life, and to reflect residents' and stakeholders' recommendations. In this way, the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study is consistent with other scenic corridors in Maricopa County.

CAREFREE HIGHWAY SCENIC CORRIDOR



**Scenic Corridor Location
Figure 1**

- LEGEND**
- Interstate
 - Highway
 - Arterial
 - Local Street
 - Scenic Corridor Boundary



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BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The preparation of these guidelines was based upon existing planning documents and citizen participation throughout the process.

Plans and Guidelines

The Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Cave Creek General Plan and the City of Phoenix General Plan provide direction into the planning of the Carefree Highway region. Furthermore, research on existing scenic corridors within Maricopa County was conducted and documented to generate ideas for possible guidelines which may apply to the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study. The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study is, in part, based on these plans and studies.

Eye to the Future 2020, Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan

Eye to the Future 2020, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan, connects the importance of land use planning with available infrastructure and services. The State of Arizona requires preparation of a comprehensive plan in order to “conserve the natural resources of the county, to ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and to promote the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the public” (A.R.S. §11-806). *Eye to the Future 2020* seeks to create strong and vibrant communities within Maricopa County by encouraging orderly development while creating a healthy environment, a vibrant economy, and an efficient transportation system.

Included as part of the comprehensive plan are several objectives and policies relating to scenic areas, including the following:

- Objective O1: Promote physical and visual public access to open space resources, which includes:
 - Policy O1.2 Encourage protection of view corridors within new and established scenic corridors.
 - Policy O1.3 Encourage protection of public access around existing regional parks from urban encroachment.

New River Area Plan

Adopted in 1999, the New River Area Plan helps accommodate future urban growth in this unincorporated area of the county. New growth will be accommodated in a manner that is consistent with protecting public health and safety, and is coordinated with available urban infrastructure and services. The New River Area Plan is the result of a large-scale public participation effort which included input and recommendations from property owners and other stakeholders. The plan’s implementation program identifies long and short-term measures that can help implement the citizen-driven goals, objectives, and policies. Specific

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policies contained in the New River Area Plan that address scenic corridors include the following:

- Policy L1.10: Encourage low profile signage and discourage off-site advertising signs.
- Policy E1.2: Encourage land uses and development designs that are compatible with environmentally sensitive areas such as parks, open space, floodplains, hillsides, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, and unstable geologic and soil conditions.
- Policy E1.4: Encourage the preservation of the scenic quality of the New River Mountains, Table Mesa, Daisy Mountain, Pyramid Peak and other surrounding mountains in the review of applications for land development, and develop other preservation programs and strategies as deemed appropriate.
- Policy ED1.1: Encourage commercial development only when its demand can be justified and with the provision that construction will be completed on the proposed facilities within a specified time period.
- Policy ED1.3: Discourage strip commercial development.

Town of Cave Creek General Plan

The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor adjoins the municipal planning area of the Town of Cave Creek along the 28th St. alignment. The Cave Creek General Plan designates approximately 160 acres of mixed use located at the northeast corner of 28th St. alignment and Carefree Highway. According to the general plan, mixed use is considered any combination of commercial, multi-family residential or single-family residential development.

City of Phoenix General Plan

The southern portion of the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor is completely within the municipal planning area of the City of Phoenix. The City of Phoenix General Plan (January 1, 2006) designates the entire southern portion of the corridor for residential densities of 1 to 2 du/acre. No other future land use categories are identified along Carefree Highway between 7th Ave. and 28th St. alignment.

City of Phoenix's Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Design Policies

The City of Phoenix adopted the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Design Policies in June 1997. The plan recommends an average setback of 205 feet and a minimum of 170 feet from the centerline of Carefree Highway. However, in commercially zoned or designated areas, the setback will be 120 feet from the centerline. Furthermore, the plan protects wash crossings by recommending a setback of 570 feet if any floodplain or floodway are present along the corridor. The plan recommends that plant type, density, and spacing should match the adjacent desert environment. The plan also recommends that bridges should be stained to color match the desert landscape, use of corten guardrails adjacent to washes, sidewalk construction should blend with the natural environment, revegetation of previously disturbed areas, and planting within the median is recommended. Maricopa County has included some of these design considerations in the updated Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study.

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Citizen Participation

To guide this update process, Maricopa County identified property owners and stakeholders to help provide unique perspectives on how these guidelines should be structured, what they should include, and what they should achieve. In addition to planning area residents, stakeholders included public and private agencies and the cities of Phoenix, Scottsdale, and the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek. The stakeholders also included a community association, homeowner association, and concerned citizen groups.

An initial public meeting was held September 12, 2006 at the Desert Mountain School to introduce the study to property owners and other stakeholders. At this meeting, staff provided information on the study's purpose and what it will achieve, sample design guidelines, and the impact that other county scenic corridors have had on urban growth. Presentations were provided by county staff, and attendees were requested to complete questionnaires to solicit input.

A second public meeting was held July 26, 2007 at the Desert View Bible Church to outline revisions made to the original Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study. At this meeting, staff discussed recommended land uses, transportation issues, and design guidelines. Staff also received several questions and comments regarding certain guidelines and policies contained in the study. Presentations were provided by county staff and participants were encouraged to return surveys to provide additional feedback.

Community Work Group

To gain more detailed information about community issues, staff worked with a community work group made up of 16 people who represented various interests within the planning area. Participants included residents, a community association, homeowner association, developers, commercial property owners, water company representative, land conservancy representatives, and other individuals who expressed interest in attending work group meetings. Intended to represent the broader community, the community work group met to help identify issues, provide recommendations regarding planning-related policies, and review draft documents. The community work group was helpful in providing the county with recommendations for the updated study.

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LAND USE

Land Ownership

Most of the properties within the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor are privately owned. There are 174 parcels within the corridor; 173 of which are privately owned. The Arizona Department of Transportation owns one parcel located northeast of 24th St. and Carefree Highway, and the Arizona State Land Department manages the land between 16th St. and 24th St. Of the 173 privately owned parcels, 153 parcels are less than 5 acres in size, 13 parcels are between 5 and 10 acres in size, and 7 parcels are greater than 10 acres in size.

Existing Zoning

As identified in **Figure 2: Existing Zoning**, most properties within the scenic corridor are zoned Rural-43 with the exception of several commercial zoned properties along Carefree Highway. Approximately 35 acres of land zoned C-2 is located at the northwest and southeast corners of Carefree Highway and 7th St. and along Carefree Highway between 10th St. and 12th St. C-2 is considered an intermediate intensity commercial zoning category, allowing such uses as automobile sales and services, furniture stores, hotels and motels, travel trailer parks, and restaurants. Additionally, approximately 5 acres of land zoned C-S is located at the southwest corner of Carefree Highway and 7th St. The C-S zoning district is intended for shopping center type uses.

Commercial Zoning

Since adoption of the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study in 1997, four commercial changes have been approved in accordance with the plan. Each zone change was from Rural-43 to C-2 commercial zoning. It is also important to note that three commercial zone changes were approved prior to 1997. These include the existing retail located at the southwest corner of Carefree Highway and 7th St. and the two existing restaurants located north and south of Carefree Highway between 10th St. and 12th St.

Special Use Permits

Special Use Permits are temporary uses that are not ordinarily allowed by the Maricopa County Zoning Ordinance unless approved by the Board of Supervisors. Special uses are permitted for specific time periods and include uses like airports, amusement parks, race tracks, and home occupations. Special uses can create unique planning impacts because certain uses are more intensive than allowed by the underlying zoning district. However, if a special use is planned properly, land use conflicts can be mitigated. Currently, there are six approved special use permits within the corridor including a plant nursery, self-storage facility, animal hospital, group care facility, and two wireless communication facilities.

Future Land Use Plan

State law requires zoning change requests to be consistent with adopted land use plans. As such, zone change requests for specific areas or parcels of land must be evaluated in relation to the overall advancement of plan goals, objectives, and policies contained in the New River

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Area Plan. The future land use categories in the New River Area Plan are consistent with the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan. It is important to note that land use designations do not supersede existing zoning. Land use designations are intended to guide future development, while existing zoning entitlements are not affected.

The New River Area Plan designates most of the land within the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor as Rural Residential which primarily allows residential development up to 1 residential dwelling unit per acre. In regards to commercial land uses, the New River Area Plan recommends Community Retail Center (CRC) uses within approximately 1,000 feet of the immediate intersection of Carefree Highway and 7th St. However, the existing Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study identifies the intersection at Carefree Highway and 7th St. as a minor activity node, with a policy stating that the node should develop as a multi-commercial node. The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study does not specify the types of uses that are encouraged or discouraged, the intensity of the types of commercial, and does not specify a distance from the intersection in which future commercial uses are allowed. Consequently, it is difficult to analyze the 'node' concept in relation to development plans for compliance with the scenic corridor recommendations. Given this difficulty and the current and future commercial development patterns along Carefree Highway, the commercial nodes identified in the previous plan have been eliminated in favor of more refined and specific commercial requisites within the planning area.

Retail and Office Uses: Overview

Upon review by staff and comments received through the public participation process, the CRC designation recommended by the New River Area Plan is considered too intense and inappropriate for the area. This revised study refines the types of commercial uses that are acceptable within the study area, and allows for future expansion of neighborhood commercial uses under certain conditions that reflect the rural character of the study area, and help accommodate specialized or niche neighborhood retail and office uses that are not intended to serve or attract customers or traffic from beyond the immediate planning area. So-called large building-size "chain" and "big box" retail store uses are neither necessary — since they already are or will likely be provided along the Carefree Highway in Phoenix, Peoria, Scottsdale, and other communities — or desired by residents of this area. By encouraging only specialized and niche retail and office uses, this study helps provide area residents with unique retail and employment opportunities typically associated with smaller communities. To help achieve such a land use pattern, total building area for a single structure should be limited to less than 25,000 square feet. If larger commercial retail and office building sizes are considered, any such increase should be subject to additional lot coverage restrictions and parking lot landscaping requirements as identified in Appendix A. Each single structure can be designed for either single tenant or multiple tenant use.

The following recommendations help further refine the concepts outlined above:

- All neighborhood office uses should utilize C-O zoning only to help manage specific uses and implement the concepts noted above.

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- All neighborhood retail uses should utilize C-S zoning only to help manage specific uses and implement the concepts noted above.
- Industrial zoning and uses are strongly discouraged and should not be allowed
- Direct access to Carefree Highway for residential development is discouraged
- Special use permits are discouraged except if they are rural in character, meet the intended concepts outlined above, and are compatible with the surrounding area.
- At the time of zone change, all neighborhood retail and neighborhood office uses should demonstrate that necessary infrastructure and services are available to serve the site, including a public water system, public sewer system, emergency response services, necessary roadway improvements, and other infrastructure and services deemed necessary.
- So-called “strip,” “big-box” or other linear designed retail commercial is strongly discouraged and should not be allowed
- All new neighborhood retail and neighborhood office development should be compatible with adjacent residential development.
- Landscaping should be compatible with the natural environment and/or adjacent development to give a consistent appearance from the roadway.

Recommended Land Uses

To help implement the development concepts and recommendations outlined in this plan, it is recommended that new retail and office uses be limited to those listed below. Proposed uses not listed below are discouraged, but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine consistency with the concepts outlined in this section. All uses are subject to the building size recommendations outlined in this plan:

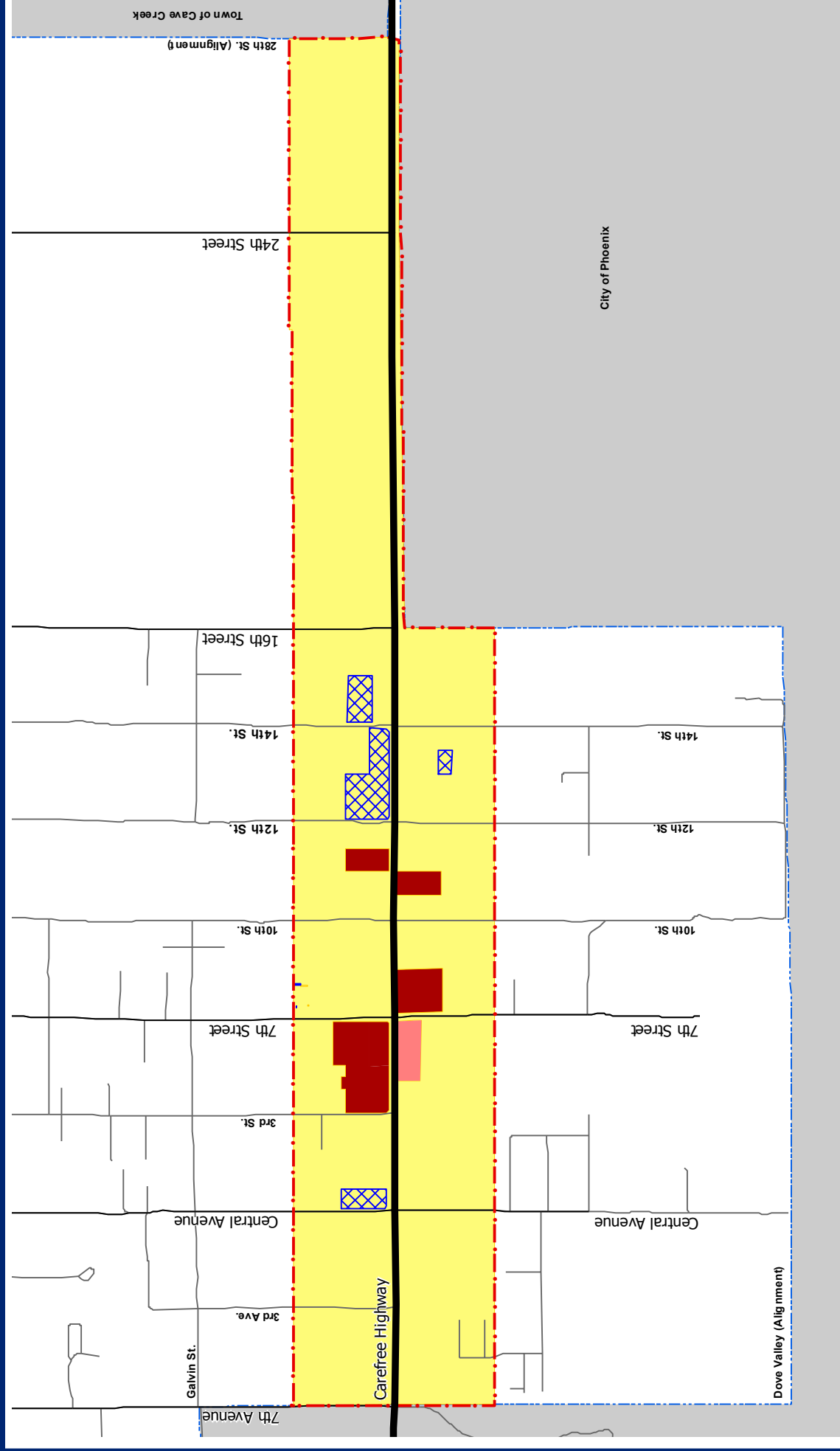
Use

Antique shops
Art galleries
Automobile parts and supplies
Bakery shops, including baking on the premises for on-site sales only
Banks (neighborhood branch)
Barber and beauty shops
Bicycle sales and repair
Book, stationery, and gift shops, excluding adult-oriented businesses
Confectionary sales
Churches and other places of worship, subject to zoning regulations
Clock and watch repair shops
Clothing sales, excluding adult-oriented businesses
Coffee shop
Computer and software sales and service
Cottage industries or Home occupations
Craft and hobby shops
Day nurseries and nursery schools, subject to zoning regulations
Delicatessen and similar uses

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Drugstores
Dry cleaning with no onsite plant
Electronics sales and service
Equestrian-oriented clothing, tack, and supplies
Feed store
Fire stations Florist shops
Group care facility
Guest ranch
Hardware stores
Health spas
Household appliance shops
Interior decorator shops
Jewelry shops
Key, locksmith or gun shops
Mini-storage, excluding outdoor storage
Office supply and copy services
Offices: professional/semi-professional/medical
Optical sales and repair
Photographer's and artist's studios
Plant nursery
Private clubs and fraternal organizations
Public facilities such as libraries, museums, parks, playgrounds, community buildings including police stations, post offices and other community service buildings used for non-commercial non-profit purposes to serve the immediate area.
Restaurants and cafes, including drive-through service and outside eating facilities, but not including those having dancing or shows, drive-in car service, or music that is audible off-site
Riding and boarding stable public
Shoe repair shops
Small animal day care
Specialty food stores and meat markets (no slaughtering of animals or poultry on the premises)
Sporting goods stores
Tailor shops
Veterinary clinics for animals, subject to zoning regulations
Video rental stores, excluding adult-oriented businesses
Wireless sales and service
Other commercial office and commercial retail uses deemed to be consistent with the goals, guidelines, policies, and general intention of this study

CAREFREE HIGHWAY SCENIC CORRIDOR



Existing Zoning
Figure 2

- Legend**
- Carefree Highway
 - Scenic Corridor Boundary
 - Arterial
 - Local Street
 - Special Use Permit
 - Incorporated
 - Zoning
 - C-S
 - C-2
 - RURAL-43



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TRANSPORTATION

The Carefree Highway area has undergone a succession of changes in recent years. In 1997, Maricopa County published the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study. The following year, Carefree Highway was widened to a four-lane divided highway, changing the character of this once rural road. Commercial shopping and increased traffic flows have since become more prevalent in this region. Creating a functional roadway that serves traffic flow and transitions with the surrounding community's rural lifestyle is a priority with the design guidelines.

Maricopa County Transportation System Plan

The mission of the Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is to provide a quality transportation system for the citizens of Maricopa County. The Transportation System Plan (TSP) was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1997 as the transportation element of Maricopa County's Comprehensive Plan. It states that the transportation network should support the safe and efficient movement of goods and people, be environmentally compatible with surrounding conditions, and be supportive of economic development activities. The TSP preceded the creation of the Major Streets and Routes Plan (MSRP), which is used to classify county roads.

Maricopa County Major Street and Routes Plan

Adopted in April 2001, the MSRP designates and maps future functional classifications for all primary and secondary roads in the Maricopa County roadway system. The MSRP defines specific classifications of roadways, built to specific widths, number of through lanes, and standards. There are six classifications defined in the MSRP – Expressways/Freeways, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local Streets. The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor has three of these classifications in the study area (see **Figure 3: Future Street Classifications**):

Principal Arterial Roadway

Carefree Highway is designated as a Principal Arterial Roadway, which features a four to six lane divided highway with bicycle lanes.

Minor Arterial Roadways

Roadways such as 7th Ave., 7th St. north of Carefree Highway, 16th and 24th Streets are designated as Minor Arterial Roadways. The maximum capacity of these roadways features two through lanes separated by a divided highway and bicycle lanes.

Local Streets

Streets such as 3rd Ave., Central Ave., 3rd St., 7th St. south of Carefree Highway, 10th, 12th, and 14th Streets are designated as Local Streets. This classification features direct access to abutting lands and two through lanes.

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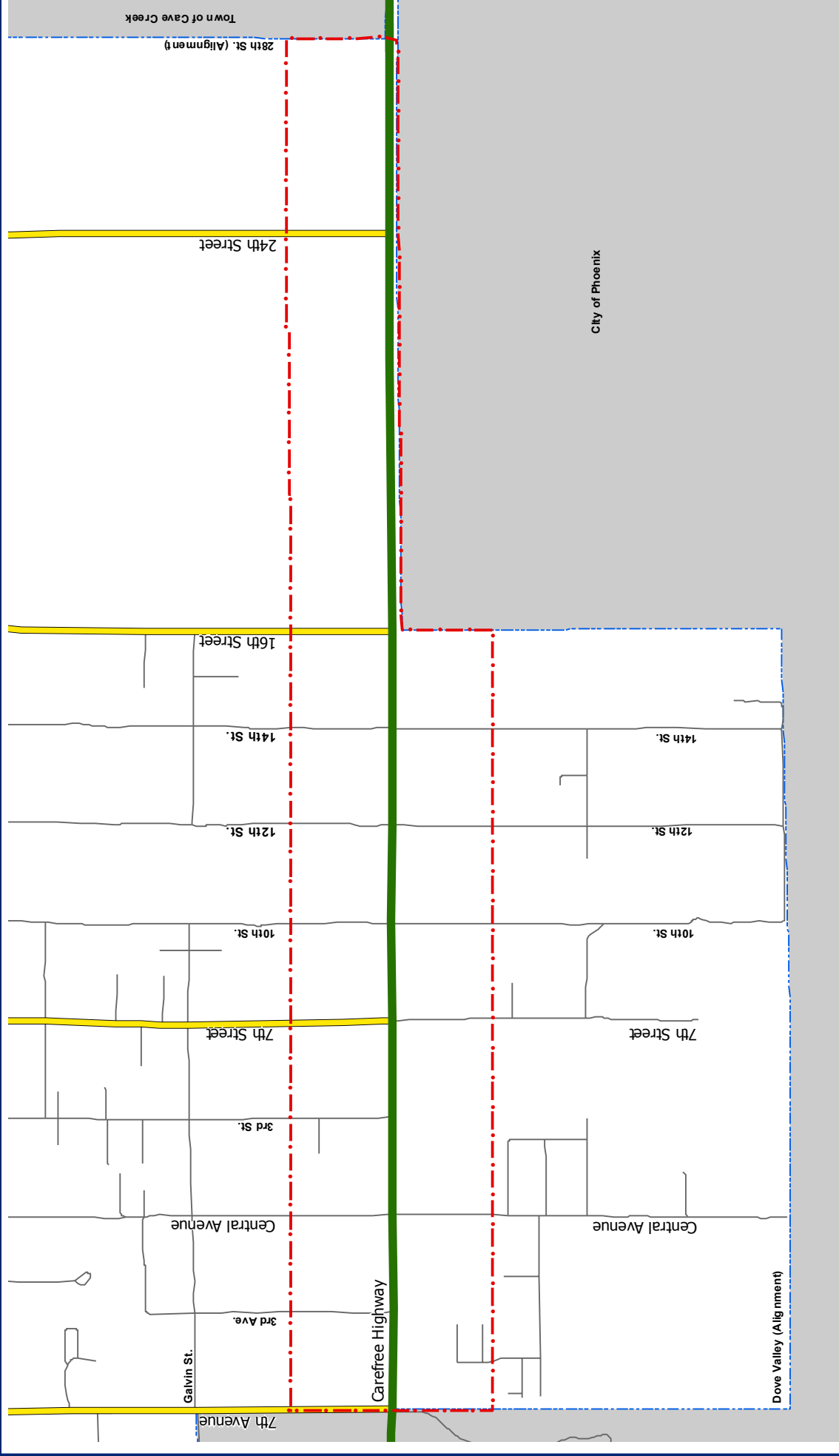
Carefree Highway Access Management and Corridor Improvement Study, I-17 to Scottsdale Road

The purpose of this study is to develop a consensus-driven vision among partner jurisdictions for Carefree Highway between I-17 and Scottsdale Road. The study goal is to establish the roadway alignment, identify existing corridor deficiencies and future requirements, establish consistent roadway design and performance criteria, and generate preliminary design plans to meet needs.

The recommended corridor improvements include roadway type, number of lanes, roadway cross-section and ultimate right-of-way requirements, traffic control measures, access features, and drainage improvements to safely accommodate future travel demands. This study will provide the County and partnering jurisdictions with a future “footprint” of the Carefree Highway corridor along with a recommended time for the phasing of roadway improvements. This study will also develop policies and guidelines for access management strategies to preserve the function of this important transportation corridor.

On August 20, 2007, MCDOT completed the Carefree Highway Access Management and Corridor Improvement Study which recommends that Carefree Highway be a six-lane divided highway between I-17 and Cave Creek Road. Expanding the roadway to MCDOT’s proposed standards is intended to accommodate increased traffic flow and create a safer commuter environment. Developing Carefree Highway to these standards will require more right-of-way. The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines will retain their integrity and will be unaffected by future improvements to the roadway. The *Carefree Highway Access Management and Corridor Improvement Study* and the *Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study* complement one another with respect to Access Management issues.

CAREFREE HIGHWAY SCENIC CORRIDOR



**Future Street
Classification
Figure 3**

- LEGEND**
- Principle Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Local Street
 - Scenic Corridor Boundary
 - Incorporated



MARICOPA COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



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ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

As a result of the public participation process, many issues were identified regarding citizens' opinions about the Carefree Highway area. Residents stated that they want to maintain the rural lifestyle but also understand that certain commercial uses may be appropriate along Carefree Highway. Additionally, plan participants expressed an interest in maintaining or strengthening the existing design guidelines and policies in order to manage the impacts of new development.

The following issues were identified during the public participation process. While not a complete list, it is intended to highlight the variety of issues to be considered.

1. Land Use

- No higher density residential development
- Building heights should be limited
- Keep existing commercial nodes, but limit uses to neighborhood services for the immediate area
- None or very minimal commercial development
- Restrict the types of commercial uses (e.g. no malls, car lots, manufacturing plants, big box stores, adult businesses, gas stations, drug stores, fast food restaurants, etc.)
- Allow retail commercial buildings up to 100,000 sq. ft.
- Higher density residential appropriate in some areas (i.e. 7th Ave. – 7th St.)
- Low rise medical/dental facilities, banks, offices, etc. should be encouraged
- Nodes unnecessary if neighborhood commercial allowed in reasonable sizes and locations along the corridor
- Preserve washes
- No development without sewer service
- Increase sq. ft. limitation or no size limit at all
- Commercial development should be allowed along the entire scenic corridor
- No commercial at 16th St. intersection
- Minimize noise at commercial nodes
- Commercial nodes should be expanded to provide more neighborhood services
- Eliminate the 24th St. node
- Eliminate mobile home parks and schools from recommended uses
- Do not allow commercial buildings over 20,000 sq. ft.

2. Transportation

- Concerns about more traffic if higher densities and commercial allowed
- Minimize traffic access along the highway, use side streets for access instead
- Reduce dust pollution
- Pedestrian access should be encouraged
- Build bridges over washes

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- Discourage widening of the Carefree Highway, and encourage alternative regional roadways such as the Sonoran Parkway, 303, or similar
- Encourage alternative regional transportation such as bicycles, carpooling, light rail, etc
- Provide additional traffic signals (i.e. 3rd St. intersection)
- Provide crosswalks at Central Ave., 10th St. and 12th St. for both pedestrians and equestrians
- Provide bicycle lanes

3. Design Guidelines

- Restrict lighting to low levels (i.e. International Dark-Sky Assoc. standards)
- Provide landscaped setback along the highway (various widths from 20 ft. – 200 ft.)
- Preserve the rural character of the area
- Limit landscaping to low-water use and native desert plants
- Preserve scenic views
- Utility lines should be underground
- Architecture should be southwestern style and colors
- Signs should be limited in size and type
- Preserve as much native desert as possible
- Signs should have minimal lighting
- Trash enclosures and utility structures should be hidden
- Some variations in architectural design should be allowed to avoid monotonous look
- Parking areas should incorporate landscaping
- Signs should use natural colors and landscaping
- Use design guidelines from neighboring communities
- Encourage consistent and upscale architectural designs
- Landscape the medians with desert plants
- Make the design guidelines consistent with other jurisdictions so businesses can compete
- Allow both native and other varieties of plants
- Limit light pole height to 16 ft.
- Preserve wildlife habitat
- Non-residential uses should be screened from view of houses using natural materials
- No open space setbacks
- Design guidelines shouldn't be too restrictive or it will create long drives for amenities
- Signs should be limited to 15 ft. height
- Signs should not be restricted, as long as they are attractive and consistent with the area
- Hardscaping (paving, roofs, sidewalks, etc.) limited to 40% on commercial properties
- Allow approximately 20% of area to be commercial or multi-family residential, with the rest rural
- No fences or walls
- Landscaping should be maintained
- Fencing should be stucco/desert colors
- Increase average setback

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- Reduce landscape setback
- Current setback guidelines should be retained
- Current landscape setback should be retained
- Landscaping of parking lots should remain at 15%
- Reduce required landscaping of parking lots to 10%

4. Other Issues

- Water availability
- Establish an Architectural Advisory Committee to work with the developer(s) before development begins
- When possible, development of adjacent properties should “cluster” (i.e. the buildings of adjacent properties should cluster on their common border) to allow maximum open space
- Developments are encouraged to use renewable water supplies, maximize recharge of groundwater, and utilize treated wastewater for water amenities and irrigation
- Include all residents in the planning and review process and follow their recommendations
- Support for the New River/Desert Hills Community Association recommendations
- No sign regulations or any other restrictions on rights of property owners
- Do not make any changes to the existing plan
- Property Maintenance and corridor maintenance
- Sidewalks, multi-use paths, and equestrian trails

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GOALS

Land Use

Land uses along Carefree Highway will determine the character of the corridor. If land uses are planned properly, and supplemented with design guidelines that enable development to blend harmoniously with the environment, much of the scenic character of Carefree Highway can be maintained. To this end, Maricopa County will strive to achieve the following goals within the study area.

- Goal #1: Promote efficient land development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, is well integrated with transportation systems, and is sensitive to the natural environment.**
- Goal #2: Maintain the views, rural character, and scenic beauty of the study area, and protect, preserve, and enhance its environmental qualities.**
- Goal #3: Protect existing plant and animal habitats and species from the impacts of new development.**
- Goal #4: Achieve specialty and niche neighborhood retail and neighborhood office uses that are high quality, sensitive in design and function to the desert and rural character, and that primarily serves the immediate area.**
- Goal #5: Deter so-called "strip," large building size "chain," "big box," and other types of retail commercial and office uses that attract customers, employees, and traffic from a regional basis.**
- Goal #6: Review all zone change and other development applications to ensure that new urban development includes the necessary urban infrastructure and urban services.**
- Goal #7: Review all zone change and other development applications to ensure respect for the scale and character of the study area.**

Transportation

The transportation element defines a system of transportation facilities and services including existing and future roads, alternative transportation modes, and system limitations. Efforts are directed at maximizing transportation system efficiency by coordinating land use and transportation planning. Therefore, this study is designed to help achieve the following transportation-related goals.

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- Goal #1:** Support the design of transportation facilities in the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Study area in a manner that reflects the rural and natural desert character of the corridor.
- Goal #2:** Improve the roadway network to meet future transportation needs, promote safety, and alleviate traffic congestion.
- Goal #3:** Provide safe facilities for alternate transportation modes.
- Goal #4:** Coordinate with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, as well as other area jurisdictions, to plan for the expansion of transportation infrastructure.

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DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines can help preserve the character and integrity of the corridor. In addition, they serve as a resource for areas where special sensitivity to the natural environment is deemed necessary. The following design guidelines implement the goals and concepts contained in this plan.

1. Character/Identity

To maintain the quality of life, the natural beauty, and appeal of the area, new development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 1.1 Open space buffers along Carefree Highway and between incompatible land uses should be provided to help minimize impacts. Berms or landscaping can provide a buffer or transition.
- 1.2 Development styles within the study area should reflect a rural and southwestern style consistent with the Sonoran Desert.

2. Architectural Design

New buildings within the corridor require particular attention with regard to building materials, textures and color. Buildings should convey the rural character of the area and complement the natural materials and colors of the adjacent landforms. The use of natural materials and non-reflective surfaces is appropriate. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 2.1 All materials and colors should be neutral earth tones and compatible with the desert environment to reduce visual contrast, heat gain, and glare and blend into the surrounding desert.
- 2.2 Design features should be included on all sides of a building.
- 2.3 Accessory structures should match the style and appearance of the principal building.
- 2.4 Reflective building materials (including glass with reflective coatings) are discouraged.
- 2.5 Design strategies and building techniques which minimize environmental impact and reduce energy consumption.

3. Building Setback

The height and placement of buildings affect views along and through the corridor. Buildings placed close to the street convey an urban instead of rural setting and reduce the feeling of openness. New development will be evaluated for compatibility with the following guidelines:

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- 3.1 An average 100 foot building setback should be provided from the Carefree Highway right of way edge (property line) to the building face. In no case should any building setback be less than 50 feet.
- 3.2 Variable (undulating) setbacks should be provided for visual relief and to avoid a linear, "strip" appearance.

4. Building Height

Building height is an important consideration because it can impede views and the amount of natural light available to surrounding property. Development will be visible in the study area, but should blend with the surrounding area to help preserve the views that support the community character and quality of life. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 4.1 For new residential development, structure height should be limited to 20 feet when it is located 50 to 100 feet from the Carefree Highway right-of-way edge adjacent the subject property line. Beyond 100 feet the height should be restricted to 30 feet.
- 4.2 For new commercial development, structure height should be limited to 20 feet (including parapets and top of the highest point of roof) when it is located 50 to 100 feet from the Carefree Highway right-of-way edge adjacent the subject property line; one foot increase allowed for each 5 feet of additional setback, up to a maximum of 30 feet.
- 4.3 Commercial development adjacent to any rural or residential zoning district should be limited to 20 feet in height (including parapets and top of the highest point of roof), when it is located within 25 feet of the subject property line. In addition, a minimum 10-foot wide landscape buffer should be provided to screen commercial uses from residential areas.

5. Landscape Setback

Maintaining a landscaped setback along the Carefree Highway corridor provides a sense of openness and serves as transition to adjacent development. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 5.1 An average 100-foot deep landscape setback should be provided along the frontage from the Carefree Highway right of way (property line) to any fences, parking areas and other improvements (except for driveways and walkways.) In no case should any landscaped setback be less than 50 feet deep. Outdoor displays should not be permitted in this area. Signage, sidewalks, and non-motorized pedestrian trails are permitted within the landscape setback.
- 5.2 Development at the setback edge (screen walls, building walls or roof forms) should ascend or descend with the natural grade and meander with the topography.

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6. Landscaping

Landscaping can provide a sense of open space, and a buffer between incompatible land uses. Undulating landscape areas along Carefree Highway will provide visual relief from the linear roadway. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 6.1 Existing vegetation should be preserved consistent with the surrounding undisturbed (or previously undisturbed) desert, except for driveways and walkways in which case a plant survey and salvage plan should be provided.
- 6.2 Re-vegetation should be consistent with the indigenous desert vegetation in terms of topsoil material and plant types used. This vegetation should have the same density and placement as the surrounding undisturbed (or previously undisturbed) desert. Decorative boulders should only be used when they accentuate the character of the desert landscape.
- 6.3 A plant survey and salvage plan should be submitted at the time of platting or precise plan submission.
- 6.4 Drought tolerant and low water consumptive landscape materials should be used.
- 6.5 When native plants must be removed, on-site transplantation in accordance with the salvage plan is encouraged.
- 6.6 Native granular soils should be maintained as a top dressing on all landscape areas to provide a consistent, desirable character that blends with the surrounding desert.
- 6.7 New landscaping should complement existing indigenous vegetation through the use of xeriscape design principles and water conservation. Landscaping materials should blend with the native vegetation in mature height and form at the time of planting.
- 6.8 Re-vegetation with a balanced mixture of larger and smaller sizes of native plant materials including native trees (minimum 5-gal.), shrubs (minimum 1-gal.), and ground cover should be used to repair all scarring as a result of the installation of underground utilities and other similar construction that disturbs the shoulder area and/or scenic setback. Scarring of rock formations or other natural features should be camouflaged with the use of chemical color treatment.
- 6.9 If possible, washes should be kept in a natural state or if disturbance is necessary new drainage channels should be landscaped in a natural fashion.

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7. Parking

Parking areas cover a significant portion of commercial property and thus should be designed in such a manner that is harmonious with the surrounding area. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 7.1 At least 10% of the surface areas of commercial parking lots should be landscaped with native vegetation, not including perimeter landscaping. Landscaping should involve shading to help reduce heat absorption and conserve energy.
- 7.2 Parking lots should accommodate trucks hauling horse trailers, boats, and/or off-road vehicles where possible.
- 7.3 Parking areas should be located on sides or behind buildings to encourage preservation and enhancement of the scenic qualities of the study area.

8. Screening

Screening of mechanical equipment and parking and loading areas will help minimize the visual presence of these functional but somewhat obtrusive uses. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 8.1 All mechanical rooftop equipment should be fully screened with material that is architecturally integrated with the building design.
- 8.2 Screening for public parking areas should consist of solid decorative walls with a maximum height of 3 feet, if visible from the right-of-way or adjacent residential use.
- 8.3 Landscaping consisting of native desert trees, shrubs, and ground covers indigenous to the area should be placed in front of any screen wall facing the corridor in the same density, size, and placement as the surrounding undisturbed (or previously undisturbed) desert.
- 8.4 Trash receptacles, outdoor storage, loading docks, transformers, mechanical and/or electrical equipment should be screened from view with landscaping and/or materials that are compatible (color and texture) with primary structures, and should be located at the rear of the primary structure.
- 8.5 Screening material along a development edge should follow the site contours horizontally and vertically. Materials and finish should be neutral, earth toned colors with textures that blend into the surrounding desert.

9. Signs

The size, material, number and placement of business identification signs within the study area is critical to maintaining the character of the area. Signage will be reviewed to minimize

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light pollution and light intensity. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 9.1 All signs should be made of materials that are consistent with the architectural treatment of the principal building and overall character of the site. Materials and colors shall be neutral earth-tones that are compatible with the surrounding desert.
- 9.2 Signs should not be placed closer than 25 feet of the Carefree Highway right-of-way.
- 9.3 Non-reflective surfaces for signs should be used except for directional, regulatory, and other signs necessary for public safety.
- 9.4 Freestanding signs for commercial uses should be monument type and rural in character. The maximum height of commercial freestanding signs should be 6 feet from finished grade, and the maximum square footage of commercial freestanding signs should be 48 square feet.
- 9.5 Monument signs should have a landscaped area of low growing vegetation of less than 2 feet in height and maturity and be located adjacent to its base.
- 9.6 A maximum of two freestanding multi-tenant identification monument signs per frontage should be permitted per parcel. Corner lots should have only one multi-tenant identification monument sign. This guideline is intended to reduce excessive sign placement along streets in the corridor.
- 9.7 Commercial wall signs should not exceed the height of the building wall or a height of 20 feet. Wall signs should not be placed above the roofline. Commercial wall signs should not exceed a total area of 24 square feet per tenant per street front and not exceed 100 square feet in total for the site. Signs may be internally illuminated but the source of the illumination shall not be visible.
- 9.8 Sign lighting should avoid glare or reflection onto adjacent property or onto Carefree Highway or adjacent streets. External "uplighting" of signs is discouraged.
- 9.9 Residential monument signs should be architecturally compatible with the principal structures on the site. Such signs should not exceed a maximum height of five (5) feet from finished grade, and should not exceed a total area of 24 square feet per street front. Corner entrances should have only one monument sign. This guideline is intended to reduce excessive sign placement along streets in the corridor.

10. Lighting

Lighting should be used to provide safety and identification, yet used sparingly to minimize nighttime glare and the impacts that lighting has on surrounding properties. Shielded and low level lighting should be used for all development throughout the corridor. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

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- 10.1 All development should comply with Maricopa County Lighting Ordinance (Section 1112) and, where feasible, International Dark-Sky Association guidelines.
- 10.2 Street lights should be placed at intervals and locations to enhance safety and remain consistent with the intensity of adjacent land uses and the image of the area.
- 10.3 All outdoor lighting should be of low intensity, fully-shielded, and directed downward.
- 10.4 All poles or standards used to support outdoor light fixtures should be treated or otherwise coated to minimize glare from the light source.
- 10.5 Use low pressure sodium (LPS) lamps whenever possible for street lighting, parking lot lighting and security lighting. Mercury vapor fixtures, lamps, and searchlights should not be used.
- 10.6 Exposed neon-type lighting should not be used.
- 10.7 The height of all lighting fixtures should not exceed 16 feet from surface grade of the parking lot.
- 10.8 Special street light design should be provided to enhance the unique character of the streetscape.

11. Access Management

New commercial and residential uses along the Carefree Highway corridor can result in traffic disruption and safety issues if access to new development is not carefully planned. The number of access points within the Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor should be minimized wherever possible. To help encourage safe and efficient access, new development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 11.1 New developments should have common access points and should utilize existing access points whenever possible.
- 11.2 Access to new development should occur on north-south cross streets whenever possible to minimize traffic conflicts on Carefree Highway.
- 11.3 Driveways on Carefree Highway should be located at least 400 feet from an intersection with a major street. Adjacent driveways should be spaced at least 150 feet apart.
- 11.5 Shared parking arrangements for adjacent businesses should be used.
- 11.6 Vehicular linkages should be provided between adjacent parking lots, whether they are internal to a single development or between adjacent developments.
- 11.7 Pedestrian and bicycle linkages should be provided between private developments and public thoroughfares.

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- 11.8 Pedestrian travel ways should be separated from vehicular travel ways where possible and should follow direct routes between buildings.
- 11.9 Access points should accommodate vehicles hauling horse trailers, boats, and/or off-road vehicles.
- 11.10 No more than one vehicular access point per non-residential development should be provided except if a traffic impact study demonstrates a need for additional driveways.

12. Walls & Fencing

Walls and fencing can impede views and reduce the sense of openness. Variation in the appearance of a wall or fence by offsetting or meandering when combined with landscaping can visually soften the edge of a development adjacent to the corridor. New development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 12.1 Perimeter fences and walls should be constructed of materials that will complement the surrounding scenic resources and, where feasible, be combined with landscaping. Landscaping in the form of native shrubs and trees should be placed in front of any wall facing Carefree Highway.
- 12.2 Straight, uninterrupted walls should not exceed 100 feet in length. Walls greater than 100 feet in length should be staggered or undulated.
- 12.3 Perimeter fences and walls (except parking screening) should be no higher than 6 feet in height. Native stone work is the preferred material for walls, but decorative concrete block walls finished with rounded edges and colored or painted adobe is also acceptable. Colors should be neutral earth tones and should blend with the natural desert setting.
- 12.4 Wall and fence finishes should be low reflection.
- 12.5 Woven metal fabric fence material (chain link) is strongly discouraged and should not be used. Conversely, view fencing that does not interfere with public views should be used.

13. Utilities and Infrastructure

Construction of utilities and infrastructure is necessary. Therefore, it is important to promote construction and design methods that prevent visual and scenic impacts. To minimize such impacts, new development will be evaluated to determine consistency with the following guidelines:

- 13.1 Utility lines should be located underground, except electric transmission lines that are 69Kv or greater.

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- 13.2 Enhanced design of bridge structures and drainage facilities (culverts) should be used to minimize visual disturbance.
- 13.3 Utility boxes and backflow prevention boxes should be color matched to the primary structure.

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SUMMARY

The Carefree Highway Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines reflect the community's vision for Carefree Highway as a rural area, yet giving consideration to specialty neighborhood retail and neighborhood office uses. Maricopa County will review zoning change requests, site plans, and building plans for compliance with the design criteria and land uses contained in this plan.

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APPENDIX A

Maximum Lot Coverage

Building and/or structure sizes of less than or equal to 25,000 square feet and zone change requests for either C-S or C-O zoning are strongly recommended. Requests for larger building and/or structure sizes, and/or more intense zoning should be subject to the following additional lot coverage requirements:

C-S Zoning & Special Use Permits

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = zoning ordinance standard (25% max. lot coverage)
- > 25,000 ≤ 35,000 sq. ft. = 20% max. cumulative lot coverage
- > 35,000 sq. ft. = 15% max. cumulative lot coverage

C-O Zoning

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = zoning ordinance standard (35% max. lot coverage)
 - > 25,000 ≤ 35,000 sq. ft. = 30% max. cumulative lot coverage
 - > 35,000 sq. ft. = 25% max. cumulative lot coverage
-

C-1 Zoning (zoning ordinance standard = 60% max. lot coverage)

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 15% max. cumulative lot coverage
- > 25,000 sq. ft. = 10% max. cumulative lot coverage

C-2 and C-3 Zoning (zoning ordinance standard = 60% max. lot coverage)

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 10% max. cumulative lot coverage
- > 25,000 sq. ft. = 5% max. cumulative lot coverage

I-1, I-2, I-3 Zoning (zoning ordinance standard = 60%)

5% max. cumulative lot coverage

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NOTES

- In instances where multiple buildings and/or structures are located within a proposed development, any building and/or structure greater than 25,000 sq. ft in size should be offset by buildings and/or structures that are less than 25,000 sq. ft. so that the average building and/or structure size for the proposed development does not exceed 25,000 sq. ft.
- In instances where multiple buildings and/or structures are located within a proposed development, the maximum cumulative lot coverage for the proposed development is based on the size of the largest building and/or structure in square feet (ex: if three buildings and/or structures are located within a proposed development zoned C-S and the largest of the three buildings and/or structures is 28,000 sq. ft., then the maximum cumulative lot coverage of all three buildings and/or structures within the proposed development should be 20%).
- Buildings and structures are defined as outlined in Chapter 2 of the Maricopa County Zoning Ordinance.

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Minimum Parking Lot Landscape

Building and/or structure sizes of less than or equal to 25,000 square feet and zone change requests for either C-S or C-O zoning are strongly recommended. Requests for larger building and/or structure sizes, and/or more intense zoning should be subject to the following minimum parking lot landscaping requirements:

C-S Zoning

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 10% min. landscape requirement
- > 25,000 sq. ft. = 20% min. landscape requirement

C-O Zoning

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 10% min. landscape requirement
 - > 25,000 sq. ft. = 20% min. landscape requirement
-

C-1 Zoning

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 15% min. landscape requirement
- > 25,000 sq. ft. = 25% min. landscape requirement

C-2 & C-3 Zoning

Largest building and/or structure size:

- ≤ 25,000 sq. ft. = 25% min. landscape requirement
- > 25,000 sq. ft. = 35% min. landscape requirement

I-1, I-2, I-3 Zoning

35% landscape requirement

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NOTES

- Landscaping requirements should not including perimeter landscaping
- In instances where multiple buildings and/or structures are located within a proposed development, the minimum parking lot landscaping for the proposed development is based on the size of the largest building and/or structure in square feet (ex: if three buildings are located within a proposed development zoned C-S and the largest of the three buildings is 28,000 sq. ft., then the minimum parking lot landscaping within the proposed development should be 20%).
- Landscape design subject to the requirements outlined in the Maricopa County Zoning Ordinance